

Greater Champaign County Girls Softball League

Rules and Guidelines

8U Softball

Last Updated: March 2024

Information for the 2024 Season

- ❑ A player's age on Dec 31, 2023 determines what age group they can play.
- ❑ The 8U League will have __ teams:
- ❑ The 8U League Jamboree will be played on **June 18 with a rain date of June 21** at the Community Park in St. Joseph, IL.
- ❑ League fee of **\$125** is due at the scheduling meeting, to be held on **March 4, 2024 at 6 pm at Leonard Recreation Center, Champaign.** Checks should be made payable to **Greater Champaign County Girls Softball League (GCCGSL).**

The Greater Champaign County Girls Softball League will use NSA Softball Rules. The NSA rule book is available online at <https://www.playnsa.com/>.

The following procedures and points are emphasized:

- The GCCGSL is a C-level instructional league with an emphasis on softball fundamentals designed to help develop players for our local school districts. Coaches should promote teamwork and sportsmanship.
- Cheers and chants are encouraged, and should be used to positively motivate and celebrate teammates. Negative cheering directed at opponents will not be tolerated. Coaches should model and monitor appropriate behavior.
- Each team should play every other team in the league a minimum of one time during the regular season. Additional games are at the discretion of the team coaches.
- Players should compete for the town of their school district unless there is no team or an exception is approved by the Commissioner.

There will be additional adaptations, exceptions, and clarifications including:

The Playing Field

- The pitching plate for the 8U league will be set at 35 feet.
- Hash marks will mark the half-way point between bases.

Equipment

- The official softball shall be an 11-inch **soft**, safety, optic yellow softball. **The recommended league ball is the Diamond Flexi-Ball or MacGregor Safe-T-Ball.**
- The official bat shall bear the NSA 2012 logo or USA/ASA certification and be manufactured by a bat company that is listed on the Approved Bat Company list found at <https://www.playnsa.com>.
- A batting helmet bearing the NOCSAE stamp is mandatory for each batter, on-deck batter, runner, and youth coach in the coach's box. **The helmet must have a properly attached face guard.** Players will NOT be required to have chin straps on their helmets.
- **Pitchers must wear a face mask while pitching**, and are encouraged to wear a heart shield. It is required that all players wear a face mask during live ball play. Each league team's organizing body will make the final ruling on this for their players.
- Catchers must wear a NOCSAE approved head protector/protective mask, a chest protector, and leg guards.
- Metal cleats are NOT allowed.

Players & Substitution

- Teams must have a minimum of eight (8) players to start a game. Teams will be allowed to start with eight (8) players without any out penalties.
- Teams will be required to use a continuous batting order that includes each player on its roster. If a player is removed or is injured, the vacated spot in the batting order will be skipped and will not be considered an out. Late arriving players are placed at the end of the batting order.

- Teams can play a maximum of ten (10) players on defense. The additional defender will be considered an additional outfield position and must start play behind the baseline.
- Teams will be allowed to make free defensive substitutions. **All players must play at least two (2) innings in the field.**
- A coach may designate a maximum of two players on their lineup card to hit off of the tee. These players should be first-year players at the 8U level. When this happens, the coach will give them three (3) pitches in each at bat and thereafter the tee will be brought out and used for that at bat.
- Any player or coach who is bleeding or has an open wound shall be prohibited from participating further in the game until appropriate treatment has been administered and clothing with blood has been removed.

The Game

- A regulation game shall consist of five (5) innings or one hour and fifteen minutes (1:15) of play.
- If the 5th inning has not started by the one (1) hour mark, the game will end after 4 innings.
- An inning consists of no more than 10 batters from each team and each batter can only bat once per inning. **No runs count after 3 outs are made.** The only exception is that if your team only has 8 or 9 players, you may bat 1 or 2 girls again, but cannot use those same girls to bat twice the rest of the game. When the tenth batter is up, the ball must be thrown to the circle to end the inning or a natural out can be made. (The ball is caught in the air, is thrown to first or a force out is made at a base.)
- During the 5th inning, if the teams have an uneven number of players the short-handed team may continue through their order a second time until they reach an equal number of potential batters as the other team.

Pitching/Hitting/Base running

- The coach **does not** have to pitch from the pitcher's plate. The coach must start inside the circle. They may step slightly out of the circle with 1 foot if needed, but the back foot must remain in the circle. Coaches are encouraged to throw pitches that are deemed "fastpitch" (with speed and no arc). This will prepare batters to advance to the next level of play.

- Each batter will receive a maximum of **six (6) pitches**. **All pitches count**. The only exception to this will be that a batter's appearance may not end on a foul ball. If a foul ball occurs on their 6th pitch, the batter will be given additional pitches until a strikeout by taking the next pitch, a strikeout swinging, or a ball in play.
- A batted ball is live and baserunners may continue to advance until the fielding team establishes possession of the ball in the pitching circle. When the pitcher has the ball inside of the circle, the play is immediately dead. If the runner is past the hash mark, they are awarded the next base. If the runner is not past the hash mark, they must return to the previous base. The baserunner cannot be tagged out when play is dead.
- Players may only advance one (1) base on an overthrow when the defense is attempting to record an out at any base.

Coaches

- Two **ADULT** coaches from the defensive team are encouraged to be in fair territory behind the baselines to help the fielding team.
- An **ADULT** coach from the defensive team may be on the field behind catcher to help retrieve balls that get past the catcher in an effort to speed up the game.

Jamboree Rules

- **Jamboree Games** will be shortened to four (4) innings or one (1) hour of play.
- The GCCGSL is responsible for providing individual participation awards. There will be player announcements and awards following each game.

Covid Safety Precautions:

- Participants are encouraged to bring own water as most ball parks might not have water fountains available
- Follow all guidelines that are in place for each field/town/park district where the game is being held.